

YOU
AREN'T
HERE



jasonandbecky.co.uk

Ingold, 2007: 84

'The traveller
from one
location and
arrives at
another is,
in between,
nowhere at all'

YOU AREN'T HERE : THE INSTITUTION AS THEME PARK

By entering the theme park we are drawn into a contract with ourselves to open our imaginations. Signing it the moment we cross the line into this other world. A world of sensory fulfillment. Visual, audible, tactile, cognitive. We are stimulated. Open. Ready and willing to absorb. To believe. To question the world as an environment.

Question reality. Doubt fiction. Open ourselves to the possibility of the hyper-real.

We encounter people on bustling walkways. In the maelstrom of provoked emotion we watch human reaction and social interaction across ages, genders and economics.

The theme park emotion is real.
Real reactions to encountered situations.
Our inhibitions have been left at the gate.

The theme park is a stimulant.
The art school of the future.

Where am I?

You are standing in front of a revolving door. It is the door to the Institution. Everything you understand about the Institution is based on knowledge and experience.

Imagine your first day at the Institution. It might have looked exactly as it does now. It might have looked completely different. Imagine your thoughts and feelings. Put yourself in front of the revolving door. Possible feelings might have included fear, nervousness, excitement, or dread.

Now imagine walking through the revolving door, and arriving in the foyer. There are three possible routes to take. Left (to the lift and staircase), right (to a corridor) or straight on (outside again). Imagine your thoughts and feelings. They might have included disorientation, uncertainty, excitement or dread.

If someone had handed you a map, would this have eased any non-positive feelings? You could have located yourself on the map, and located the point at which you wanted to be on the map, then connected the two points and followed this path in order to reach your destination. Easy.

How do I know where I am?

You know where you are because you are here. Even if you don't know where *here* is exactly, you know you are *here*. You can navigate *here* with varying degrees of competence, based on your own knowledge, experience, and spatial awareness.

And if someone *had* handed you a map, you would have been able to navigate this *here* with more ease, assuming the map you had been given was, in fact, a map of *here*.

But what if that map was not a map of *here*? Not a map of the Institution? Possibly a map of the Institution with no resemblance to the physical attributes of the Institution itself. Where would that leave you? Would you be *here*? Or would you be *there*?

In philosophical terms, when looking at a map, the user is 'deterritorialised from his/her own identity... 'here' and 'there', at once both 'I' and 'he/she'.

This 'deterritorialisation' refers to the concept of *becoming*, put forward by French Philosopher Gilles Deleuze.

Becoming involves an exchange between two separate entities, in which one temporarily moulds itself to the other. It is made up of a *deterritorialisation*, in which we become the other, and a *reterritorialisation*, in which the other becomes us. *Becomings* are endlessly occurring, everywhere we look, every second of every day. These *becomings* form part of what Deleuze calls a *rhizome*. The rhizome, Deleuze claims, '...connects any point with any other point... It has neither a beginning nor end, but always a middle, through which it pushes and overflows.' (Deleuze et al: 1983:47) This 'middle' might be the foyer of the Institution. Then again, it might not. But what if it was? What if every other conceivable point, every other connection, was within reach?

For the purpose of this argument, suppose the map you are looking at is a map of a theme park. If you were to navigate the Institution following this map of the theme park, and taking the corridor to the right of the foyer resulted in your arrival at Fantasyland, how do you know where you really are? Your mind has followed the route to Fantasyland. Your body, to the Fine Art department at the Institution. But who exactly is in charge here? Body or brain?

It is interesting to consider this thought in terms of Deleuze's notion of *reality*, which he explains can be broken down into two forms; the *actual* and the *virtual*. (Parr 2010: 223) Anything virtual, any thought in the mind, is as real as any physical thing. In this instance, is it possible to be located at both Fine Art, and Fantasyland, simultaneously?

If we return to the notion of the rhizome, in which we are becoming other, and other is becoming us, by locating ourselves both *here* and *there*, are we physically becoming fine artists while simultaneously psychologically becoming characters in Fantasyland? If we allow this to happen, are we able to transform the Institution into whatever we imagine, through *it becoming us*?

Deleuze notes that 'The rhizome refers to a map that must be produced or constructed... The tracings are what must be transferred onto the map, and not the reverse.' (Deleuze et al: 1983:48)

We are the makers of the map. We have the power to lay the paths of our own destiny. Dream big. Feel fear, nervousness, disorientation, uncertainty, excitement, dread.

Grab a trowel, lay your own paths. Make your own Dynevorneverland.

You are not here. This is not real.
You are in a simulation.

This simulation will begin to drive your artistic practice. It is your tool. It is your delegated medium.

It is an inevitable path of your postmodern life.
This is a true simulation.

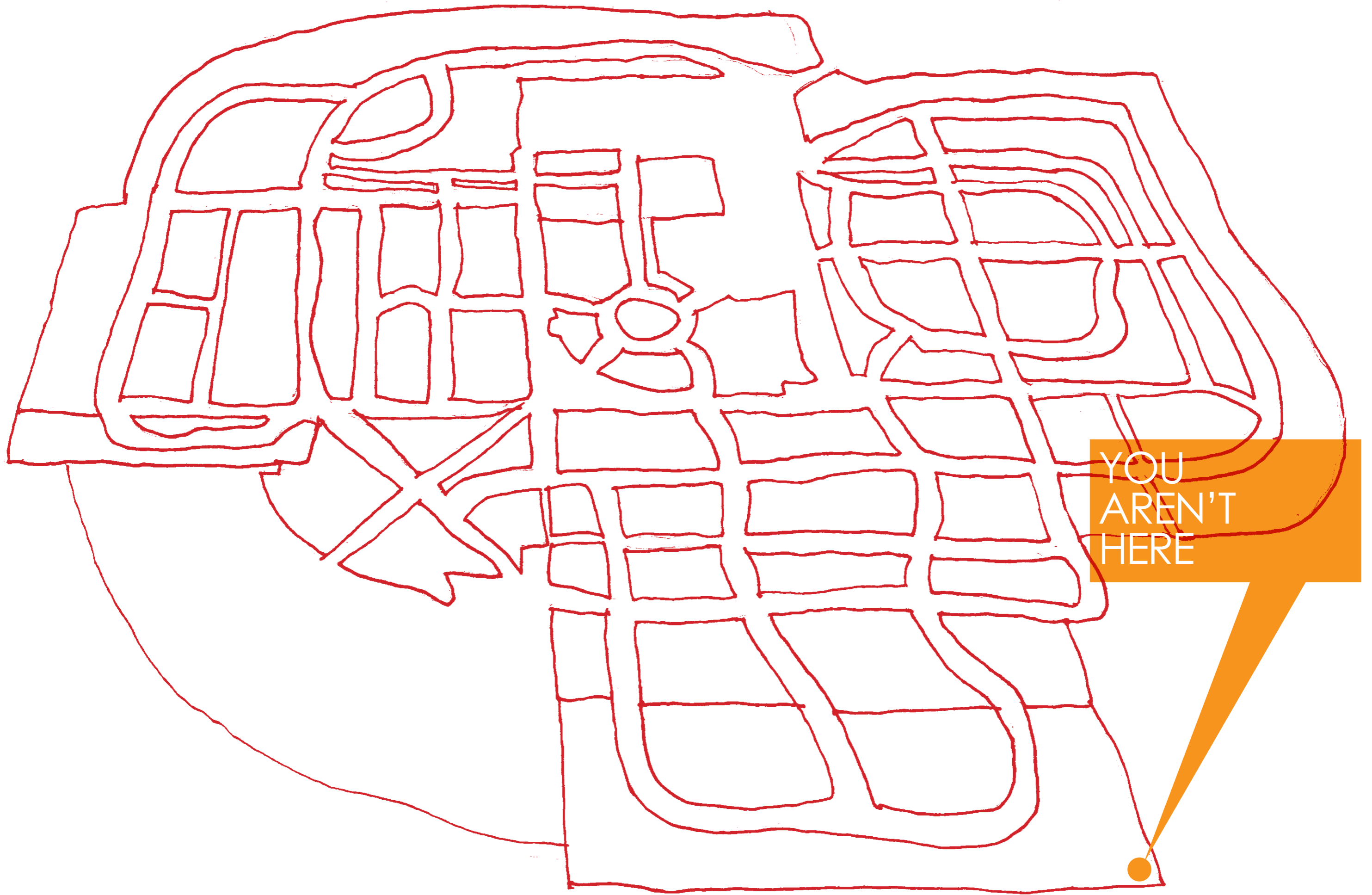
The institution simulates. Simulation is the method by which we are all constituted. It is the walls around us. With the infinite possibilities of creativity at our fingertips it is simulation that reins us in. Simulated rules and prescribed realities are the lifeblood of artistic schooling.

Our media-informed knowledge base and social behaviour make breaking out impossible.

We can only accept the boundaries and push them.

They are, after all, a simulation.

You are not here. This is not real.



YOU
AREN'T
HERE